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## Corzine's visit to Darfur to put spotlight on mass killings

By JOHN BRAND Staff Writer, (609) 272-7275

U.S. Sen. Jon Corzine plans to travel to Sudan over the coming days to draw attention to the mass killings and forced displacements in Darfur and assess the harsh conditions of humanitarian workers.

"The transparency in a place where there is no real free press requires people outside of Sudan to visit and report back to raise issues and create a voice for those who are displaced and under attack," Corzine, who is seeking the Democratic nomination for New Jersey governor, said Thursday during a teleconference.

An estimated 280,000 people have died since war broke out in the western Sudanese province in February 2004, causing disease, the displacement of more than 2 million people and high rates of malnutrition among children.

These conditions led the United Nations to characterize Darfur in 2004 as the worst humanitarian disaster in the world.

In December and January, humanitarian workers were attacked, Corzine said.

"There are a whole series of violent acts that took place in December and January, and I want to know if that has continued," Corzine said.

Corzine said he is in the process of obtaining travel visas and, if his efforts fail, he will travel to Chad, which is where the displaced Sudanese are being housed.

Corzine also expects to spend at least one day of his four-day trip in Iraq, where he is attempting to spend time with the 1,700 members of the New Jersey National Guard. His exact itinerary will remain confidential, but Corzine said he also plans to visit Baghdad and Jordan.

While in Iraq, Corzine will meet privately with intelligence officials to discuss soldiers' conditions on the ground and members of the newly formed Iraqi government to discuss the political environment in Iraq, he said.

Corzine's trip comes a week after the Senate approved the Darfur Accountability Act, which Corzine sponsored, and an amendment that adds \$90 million for critical humanitarian aid to Darfur and assistance to African Union peacekeeping forces monitoring the region.

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